

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

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NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM NATO MBFR

SUBJ: MBFR: BILATERAL CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET DEP REP OF
JUNE 30, 1978

REF: (A) MBFR VIENNA 363 DTG 231400Z JUN 78

(B) MBFR VIENNA 40 DTG 141618Z FEB 77

1. IN BILATERAL CONVERSATION JUNE 30 ON MARGIN OF SOCIAL
OCCASION, US DEP REP TOLD SOVIET DEP REP SHUSTOV THAT WESTERN
REPS WERE DISAPPOINTED WITH SOVIET FAILURE IN JUNE 27
INFORMAL SESSION TO COMMENT ON LIST PROVIDED BY WESTERN
REPS OF TYPES OF SOVIET UNITS CONTAINED UNDER MAJOR FORMATIONS,
AND PARTICULARLY WITH INDICATION BY SOVIET REP TARASOV THAT THE
WEST HAD COMPOSED THIS LIST. IN FACT, AS THE LIST ITSELF HAD
INDICATED, IT WAS BASED ON STATEMENTS MADE IN INFORMAL SESSIONS
BY EASTERN REPS. BEYOND THAT, AS SHUSTOV WOULD BE AWARE, THE
LIST HAD ACTUALLY BEEN GIVEN BY THE SOVIET DELEGATION TO THE US
DELEGATION IN MARCH 1977.

2. SHUSTOV DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY TO THIS COMMENT. HE
SAID SOVIETS SAW NO LEGITIMATE USE OF THE LIST IN THE CONTEXT OF
QUESTIONS ABOUT ALLOCATION OF SOVIET PERSONNEL TO MAJOR FORMATIONS.

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MOREOVER, SOVIETS SAW NO LOGIC WHATEVER IN CONTINUAL WESTERN
QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WAS INCLUDED IN MAJOR FORMATIONS.
REGARDLESS OF THE ANSWERS TO SUCH QUESTIONS, THEY
DID NOT EVEN DEAL WITH THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE OVERALL
EASTERN FIGURES WERE CORRECT.

3. US DEP REP EXPLAINED THAT WESTERN PARTICIPANTS WERE

TRYING TO LINE UP THOSE UNITS OF SOVIET FORCES WHICH THE WEST HAD PLACED IN THE CATEGORY OF MAJOR FORMATIONS IN WESTER FIGURES ON SOVIET FORCES WITH EASTERN STATEMENTS ON THE SAME TOPIC IN ORDER TO FURTHER THE INQUIRY OF WHERE WITHIN THE SOVIET FORCE THE MAIN DISCREPANCIES WERE TO BE FOUND. THE US REP HAD ALREADY TOLD THE SOVIETS EARLIER THAT THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN WESTERN AND EASTERN FIGURES ON SOVIET FORCES IN MAJOR FORMATIONS WAS DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGE.

4. SHUSTOV SAID WITH SOME FEELING THAT, EVEN IF THE EAST GAVE EVERY LAST DETAIL ON ITS FORCES, THE WEST WOULD NOT CHANGE ITS FIGURES BECAUSE THESE FIGURES HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY COMPILED TO SERVE AS A BASIS FOR THE WEST'S DEMANDS FOR ASYMMETRICAL EASTERN MANPOWER REDUCTIONS.

5. US DEP REP SAID WESTERN FIGURES AND THE WESTERN REDUCTION PROGRAM WERE BASED ON FACTS. HE COMMENTED THAT, IN TARASOV'S LAST DISCUSSION WITH US REP (PARA 14, MBFR VIENNA 363), TARASOV HAD SAID THAT SOVIET REP KHLESTOV HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF THE ACTUAL SOVIET FIGURES ON WARSAW PACT MILITARY PERSONNEL UNTIL MAY OF 1976. HOWEVER, IN DISCUSSION BETWEEN TARASOV AND SHUSTOV AND US REPS AT THE BEGINNING OF 1977 (PARA 11, MBFR VIENNA 40, 1977), SHUSTOV HIMSELF HAD CLAIMED THAT HE HAD KNOWN THE EASTERN FIGURES FROM THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE THESE TWO STATEMENTS.

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6. SHUSTOV SAID RATHER DEFIANTLY THAT HIS 1977 STATEMENT HAD BEEN CORRECT. US DEP REP POINTED OUT THAT SHUSTOV WAS IN EFFECT ASKING DEP REP TO BELIEVE THAT HE, SHUSTOV, HAD KNOWN THE EASTERN FIGURES FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT THAT THE HEAD OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION, KHLESTOV, HAD NOT. US DEP REP SAID THAT SHUSTOV WOULD APPRECIATE THAT IT WAS SITUATIONS LIKE THESE WHICH DEEPENED WESTERN SKEPTICISM ABOUT EASTERN FIGURES. SHUSTOV STATED THAT THE DATA DISCUSSION AND THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOT GET ANYWHERE FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS AND TERMINATED THE CONVERSATION. DEAN

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